



Michael E. DeBakey Veterans Affairs Medical Center



VA Pride

Vol. 4 No. 6 An Information Guide for the Veterans We Serve in Southeast Texas November/December 2005

Beaumont VA Outpatient Clinic • Charles Wilson VA Outpatient Clinic, Lufkin • Galveston VA Outpatient Clinic
New Orleans Houston-based VA Outpatient Clinic • Texas City VA Outpatient Clinic

Houston VA Now Offers Online Prescription Refills

HOUSTON -Veterans receiving their health care at the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center (MEDVAMC) or at any one of its outpatient clinics may now order prescription refills and check the status of prescription refills on the Internet at their convenience.

To refill prescriptions online, you must be a VA patient, have prescriptions written by a VA physician that have already been filled at least once at a VA pharmacy, and have an online MyHealtheVet account at www.myhealth.va.gov.

Veterans may also view and track their entire prescription history on this Web site.

Once a refill has been ordered, the medications will be mailed to the veteran from either the MEDVAMC pharmacy in Houston or the Consolidated Mail Outpatient Pharmacy (CMOP) in Tennessee.

Instructions for creating an online MyHealtheVet account are available on the Web site, www.myhealth.va.gov. Brochures with step-by-step instructions for creating an account may also be picked up from the MEDVAMC Outpatient Pharmacy at the turn-in window.

The MEDVAMC Library offers free, introductory computer classes for veterans. Call (713) 794-7856 to schedule your session today.

For questions or concerns about your medication or for practical medical advice, please call the VA Network Telecare Center Hotline at (713) 794-8985 or toll-free 1-800-639-5137. Registered nurses, pharmacists, and administrative clerks are ready to answer your health care questions 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The VA Network Telecare Center is not for life-threatening emergencies. Veterans with life-threatening emergencies should immediately call 911. ♦

MEDVAMC boasts 21 staff physicians on Best Doctors list plus 59 consultants and attending physicians.

80 Houston VA Docs Listed as "Best Doctors" in the Nation

HOUSTON - The medical knowledge company, Best Doctors, Inc. has included 80 physicians who provide patient care at the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center (MEDVAMC) in the latest compilation of The Best Doctors in America® database.

"I am very pleased with this recognition of our physicians' clinical excellence by Best Doctors," said Thomas B. Horvath, M.D., F.R.A.C.P., chief of staff, MEDVAMC. "This is yet another indicator that the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center continually strives to offer the highest quality of health care possible for the veterans living in southeast Texas."

The MEDVAMC, located in Houston, boasts 21 staff physicians on the Best Doctors list, along with 59 physician consultants and attending physicians. The list of the MEDVAMC staff physicians selected as the best in their field for the year 2004 is on page 3 of this newspaper.

According to its Web site, Best Doctors, Inc. is the global leader in

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Listed as one of the best doctors in the nation in the field of physical medicine and rehabilitation, Helene K. Henson, M.D., Rehabilitation Care Line executive at the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center examines veteran Emmitt Thompson during a recent appointment. Henson also serves as an assistant professor in the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Baylor College of Medicine. She is actively working to develop clinical practice guidelines for the management of amputation rehabilitation for VA and the Department of Defense.

VA Shining Star in Disaster Relief Efforts

HOUSTON - On August 31, 2005, as the country realized the devastation Hurricane Katrina inflicted along the Gulf Coast, the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) was activated. In Houston, this meant area hospitals began gearing up to receive patients from the hurricane-affected areas under the coordination of the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center (MEDVAMC).

That day, the MEDVAMC began moving supplies, equipment, and personnel to Ellington Field to establish a Patient Reception Team (PRT). A PRT is comprised of physicians, nurses, pharmacists, technicians, housekeepers, facilities management, police officers, and health administration personnel.

With the first C-130 Air National Guard military transport aircraft arriving at 9 p.m. that day, the MEDVAMC PRT medically triaged almost 800 patients from 21 flights in the next five days. The patients, ranging from a 4-month-old to the very elderly, were generally suffering from dehydration and fatigue. The team saw a variety of medical conditions

including recent organ transplants, blood clots, ventilator-dependent patients, obstetric emergencies, heart attacks, emergency dialysis, infections, and strokes.

In the next two weeks, the MEDVAMC admitted more than 100 patients from the hurricane-affected areas. The stories of these evacuees were amazing; none more so than that of Stanley Heinrich, a 79-year-old WWII Navy veteran, and his wife, Claudia. When their mobile home was swept away by flood waters, the Heinrichs clung to a tree and each other for three days to keep from drowning while at the same time, fighting off hunger, fatigue, the elements, insects, and snakes. They were rescued by boat and taken to the Superdome in New Orleans. Eventually, they were airlifted to Ellington Field in Houston where they were triaged by the MEDVAMC PRT. When it was determined Mr. Heinrich was a veteran, he and his wife were admitted to the MEDVAMC for care.

Hundreds of veterans and their

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VA health care providers are now offering vaccinations and strongly urge all veterans to get their flu shot in the next few weeks.

What is the real story with Bird Flu and what will this year's Flu Season bring?

HOUSTON - There has been a great deal of concern and discussion about the Avian (Bird) Flu this year. Up to now, there has been no sustained spread of the Avian Flu from human to human. The only human cases are among people who have been heavily contaminated following very close association with sick birds. Scientists believe the Avian Flu virus will have to change itself considerably to be able to spread rapidly among humans.

Although there are current experiments to make a vaccine for Avian Flu, mass production will take time. It may also be pointless to make a vaccine today, because the vaccine, to be protective, will have to match the strain that is actually able to infect and sustain transmission in humans. It is also possible and hoped that when the Avian flu changes and adapts to infect humans, it will also become less severe.

We can only speculate if or even when the current Avian flu virus will be able to adapt to humans. It is also possible it will not be Avian Flu that spreads to humans but something entirely different.

Research points toward the suggestion that parts of current human

flu viruses originally came from birds. While this "animal origin" has been known for some time, what is new is that scientists are now able to monitor animal populations much better to find new strains of flu. With more advanced warning, we will be better prepared to protect ourselves in the future.

Whatever strain of flu affects humans, it will most likely follow its customary pattern of distribution. New strains of flu often appear early in small rural villages in eastern Asia (China, Thailand, Viet Nam, etc.). At this point, experts usually become aware of the new strain and begin to study it and all the other flu strains circulating in different parts of the world. By April each year, they make a decision as to which flu strains are most likely to spread extensively during that year. For those strains, scientists begin to make the vaccine health care providers administer each fall. Fortunately for us, they have been right in about 18 of the last 20 years.

Once a "humanized" strain of flu occurs, it begins to spread worldwide. First, it makes its way from the farm to the market, then intercity travel, and finally through international travelers. The vaccine developed this year by health



Spinal Cord Injury Unit nurse Reginald Velasquez, LVN administers a flu shot to veteran Elton Nodier. MEDVAMC health care providers are now offering vaccinations and strongly urge all veterans to get their flu shot in the next few weeks. Basic public health measures, such as washing your hands and covering your coughs, can make a huge difference in reducing the spread of the flu virus.

care experts will not protect against Avian Flu, but it is likely to protect against the current strain of typical flu seen nearly every year for the past few decades.

Timely vaccination is *very important* for people at high risk of flu and its complications. The Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center (MEDVAMC) began vaccinating veterans against flu on October 7, 2005. Our shipment of vaccine was delayed a few days because of Hurricane Rita. MEDVAMC health care providers are now offering vaccinations and strongly urge all veterans to get their flu shot in the next few weeks.

As in the past, the MEDVAMC will follow the flu vaccination recommendations of the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This year, the recommendations include two new groups determined to be at significant risk of flu and its complications.

The first recommendation is any person with a condition that can compromise respiratory function or the handling of respiratory secretions or that can increase the risk for aspiration should be vaccinated. Examples would include people with cognitive dysfunction, spinal cord injuries, seizure disorder, or other neuromuscular disorders. The second new recommendation is pregnant women in any trimester should consider vaccination.

The VA nationally has gone one step further than the CDC recommendations in the area of vaccinating health care workers. The VA policy simply says that any VA employee working in a VA hospital or clinic should get vaccinated. There are studies that show vaccinating health care workers is more effective in preventing influenza in some patients than actually vaccinating the patient. This is because often people at high-risk of flu and its complications cannot develop optimal protection following their own vaccination.

This does not mean that patients should not get vaccinated. On the contrary, it indicates the significant role employees can play in bringing influenza

infection to at-risk patients. At the MEDVAMC, more than 1,800 employees a year are vaccinated to protect veterans as well as the community.

Primary CDC recommendations state the following persons should be vaccinated:

- ✓ People 65 years of age and older.
- ✓ Residents of long term care facilities housing persons with chronic medical conditions.
- ✓ Persons who have long-term health problems such as heart disease, lung disease, asthma, kidney disease, metabolic disease (such as diabetes), and anemia and other blood disorders.
- ✓ People with certain conditions (such as neuromuscular disorders) that can cause breathing problems.
- ✓ People with weakened immune systems from HIV/AIDS or other diseases affecting the immune system, long-term treatment with drugs such as steroids, or cancer treatment with x-rays or drugs.
- ✓ All children 6 to 23 months of age.
- ✓ People 6 months to 18 years of age on long-term aspirin therapy (these people could develop Reye's syndrome if they got influenza).
- ✓ Women who will be pregnant during the influenza season.
- ✓ Physicians, nurses, family members, or anyone else in close contact with people at risk of serious flu.
- ✓ Household contacts and out-of-home caretakers of newborns to infants up to 23 months of age.

People who have allergies to eggs or the vaccine components, or a history of Guillain-Barre Syndrome should discuss these things with their doctor. People with severe allergies should not get vaccinated but under some conditions patients with Guillain-Barre Syndrome may be able to be vaccinated.

If you have questions about Avian Flu, flu shots, or the flu vaccine, please consult with your primary care provider or contact the MEDVAMC Preventive Medicine Coordinator at (713) 794-8768.

♦ Charles E. Wright, Ph.D., MEDVAMC Preventive Medicine Coordinator

A Word from the Director . . .

Walk the Talk

HOUSTON - As we celebrate Veterans Day this year, it is a time to remember the service and sacrifice men and women have given for our country. Since our creation as a Veterans Bureau 75 years ago, the central mission for VA has been "to care for him who shall have borne the battle..." This statement is engraved on the side of our headquarters building in Washington, D.C. We include these words in major speeches, news stories, and Web sites about who we are and who we serve.

But this fall, our fellow VA employees put these words into action. In New Orleans, Biloxi, and Gulfport, VA employees stayed with their patients in the face of devastating Hurricane Katrina. With their own homes at risk and the safety of their families unknown, these men and women demonstrated their commitment and devotion to their patients and fulfilled Lincoln's words in a way that genuinely inspired us all.

At the New Orleans VA Medical Center, the staff cared for and comforted their patients in conditions that called upon every ounce of energy and courage they could muster. Such heroism motivated us all to



Edgar L. Tucker, Medical Center Director

respond and intensify our own efforts to prepare and provide response and relief efforts for both Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. When the need arose, we gladly welcomed these VA brothers and sisters into our hospital as honored guests.

I am proud of the way the staff of the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center responded to these crisis situations. I am also proud to be a part of an organization like the VA that under the most extreme conditions demonstrated that it can absolutely, "Walk the Talk." ♦

More than 20 Houston VA Physicians on "Best Doctors" List

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providing information about, and access to, the best medical care in the U.S. and around the world. For over a decade, the company has been conducting the largest independent surveys of the medical profession to identify the doctors that other doctors consider to be the best in their specialties.

The Best Doctors polling methodology is designed to mimic the informal peer-to-peer referral process that doctors themselves use to identify appropriate specialists for their patients. The company has expanded this local process to include regional and national groups of physicians.

Using extensive proprietary polling and balloting software, the company's peer-reviewed surveys bring together the insights and experience of tens of thousands of leading specialists all over the country, eliminating the biases that can distort smaller-scale surveys.

Because doctors are not required, nor allowed to pay a fee to be listed, Best Doctors has gained the respect of the medical profession and patients alike as an unbiased source of top quality medical information. ♦ *portions of this article are courtesy Best Doctors, Inc.*

Kimberly A. Arlinghaus, M.D.
Mental Health Care Line
Specialty: Psychiatry

David H. Berger, M.D.
Operative Care Line
Specialty: Surgical Oncology

Timothy Boone, M.D.
Operative & Spinal Cord Care Lines
Specialty: Urology

Blase A. Carabello, M.D.
Medical Care Line
Specialty: Cardiovascular Disease

Rabih Darouiche, M.D.
Medical & Spinal Cord Care Lines
Specialty: Infectious Disease

Charles S. DeJohn, M.D.
Mental Health Care Line
Specialty: Psychiatry

Donald T. Donovan, M.D.
Operative Care Line
Specialty: Otolaryngology

Richard J. Hamill, M.D.
Medical Care Line
Specialty: Infectious Disease

Michael H. Heggeness, M.D., Ph.D.
Operative Care Line
Specialty: Orthopedic Surgery

Helene K. Henson, M.D.
Rehabilitation Care Line
Specialty: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

Mark E. Kunik, M.D.
Mental Health Care Line
Specialty: Psychiatry

Douglas L. Mann, M.D.
Medical Care Line
Specialty: Cardiovascular Disease



Listed as one of the best doctors in the nation in the field of ophthalmology, Silvia D. Orengo-Nania, M.D., Eye Care Line executive at the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center examines veteran Coy Powers during a recent appointment. Orengo-Nania also serves as an associate professor in the Department of Ophthalmology at Baylor College of Medicine. Her academic and clinic interest are in the area of glaucoma, its treatment, and prevention. She is presently working on improving patient education and compliance with medications in the veteran population.

Alice Y. Matoba, M.D.
Eye Care Line
Specialty: Ophthalmology

Daniel M. Musher, M.D.
Medical Care Line
Specialty: Infectious Disease

David T. Netscher, M.D.
Operative Care Line
Specialty: Hand Surgery & Plastic Surgery

Silvia D. Orengo-Nania, M.D.
Eye Care Line
Specialty: Ophthalmology

Robert B. Parke, Jr., M.D.
Operative Care Line
Specialty: Otolaryngology

Maria C. Rodriguez-Barradas, M.D.
Medical Care Line
Specialty: Infectious Disease

Theodore Rosen, M.D.
Medical Care Line
Specialty: Dermatology

Robert S. Tan, M.D.
Extended Care Line
Specialty: Family Medicine

D. Robert Wiemer, M.D.
Operative Care Line
Specialty: Plastic Surgery

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The award recognizes the Michael E. DeBakey's commitment to the veterans it serves and to the community.

DeBakey VA Medical Center Honored with VA's Top Quality Award

HOUSTON - The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has selected the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center (MEDVAMC) to be this year's recipient of the Robert W. Carey Organizational Excellence Award — the department's top award for quality achievement. Based on the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award criteria, the award recognizes the MEDVAMC's commitment to the veterans it serves and to the community, as well as performance improvement efforts made by the medical center and its satellite clinics.

Awarded Magnet Recognition for Excellence in Nursing Services in 2004, the MEDVAMC serves as the primary health care provider for more than 137,000 veterans in southeast Texas. Including the satellite clinics in Lufkin and Beaumont, MEDVAMC outpatient clinics logged over 700,000 outpatient visits in fiscal year 2004.

In 2005, the MEDVAMC opened new outpatient clinics in Galveston and Texas City, and a 21-suite Fisher House. A Fisher House is "a home away from

home" for families of patients receiving medical care at major military and VA medical centers. Veterans from around the country are referred to the MEDVAMC for specialized diagnostic care, radiation therapy, surgery, and medical treatment including cardiovascular surgery, gastrointestinal endoscopy, ophthalmology, nuclear medicine, and treatment of spinal cord injury and diseases.

Carey Award competitors include VA medical centers and Networks as well as entities within the Veterans Benefits Administration and the National Cemetery Administration. The award is widely used as a model for running a successful organization.

Winners must show they satisfy patients, empower staff, maintain financial success, and improve their community. The award program centers on excellence in leadership; strategic planning; focus on patients, other customers, and markets; measurement, analysis, and knowledge management; staff focus; process management; and organizational

performance results. The MEDVAMC's focus on this approach, deployment, and results is evidenced through its pursuit of excellence through quality by design.

"I am ecstatic and extremely proud the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center was chosen by VA Secretary Nicholson to receive the Carey Award," said MEDVAMC Director Edgar L. Tucker, B.A., M.P.H., C.H.E. "This recognition speaks volumes about the outstanding people and programs at the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center, and the high quality of health care we provide to veterans in Southeast Texas."

The Robert W. Carey Quality Award, presented annually since 1992, is named for the former director of the VA Regional Office and Insurance Center in Philadelphia who died in 1990. Carey led his office in initiating a total-quality management approach to serving veterans and their families. Through the Carey Award and other quality initiatives, VA is continually making improvements in its delivery of services and quality of health care to veterans. ♦

Book Donations Welcomed

HOUSTON - The Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center (MEDVAMC) receives a variety of donations from community members throughout the year.

Popular donated items include books and magazines. Reading materials in good condition are accepted through the MEDVAMC Voluntary Service located in Room 2A-104 on the 2nd Floor, and then forwarded to the MEDVAMC Library.

The Library welcomes donations of hardbacks and paperbacks with the understanding the publications may be added to the facility collection or distributed throughout the medical center.

Any item with mold or mildew, wet pages, insect markings or droppings, large areas of pages previously wet but now dry, spider webs, or excessive dust will not be accepted.

Please call the Voluntary Service Office at (713) 794-7135 to arrange a donation. ♦

VA Shining Star in Disaster Relief Efforts

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families fled to Houston, many needing urgent medical attention, medications, dialysis, and mental health services. As part of a multi-level plan to provide health care to veterans evacuated from New Orleans, the MEDVAMC opened the New Orleans Houston-based VA Outpatient Clinic on September 8, 2005. The clinic, located in the Recreation Therapy Gymnasium on the VA complex, now provides primary care, pharmacy, and mental health services for hurricane-affected veterans.

As soon as staff members from the evacuated New Orleans VA Medical Center were settled and in-processed by the MEDVAMC Human Resources Office, they began working at the MEDVAMC to provide care to evacuated patients.

In addition, VA health care providers, including nurses, social workers, pharmacists, administrative personnel, and health care technicians, from VA facilities all over the country arrived daily to assist in opening additional beds, clinics, programs, and services.

On September 21, 2005, the MEDVAMC braced for a second natural disaster in a month's time, Hurricane Rita. Staff members prepared the facility and grounds for extreme weather, stocked all necessary fuel, water, food, medications, and supplies, and made arrangements for essential staff to be on hand to meet the health care needs of critically ill inpatients.

Citizens in Galveston and Brazoria counties were ordered to evacuate and thousands of people from other Houston neighborhoods joined them on the crowded highways. Outpatient clinics in Houston, Galveston, Texas City, and

Beaumont were closed on September 22 and 23, 2005 in anticipation of the storm. However, the Charles Wilson VA Outpatient Clinic in Lufkin remained operational during this time.

Late Friday, September 23, 2005, the storm veered away from Houston and the MEDVAMC immediately switched from hurricane preparedness to hurricane relief. The facility quickly made preparations to receive patients from southeast Texas and Louisiana.

The VA outpatient clinics in Galveston and Texas City were spared storm damage and reopened on September 28, 2005 in accordance with guidance from local government officials. After a bit of clean-up, the Charles Wilson VA Outpatient Clinic in Lufkin also reopened that day.

The situation in Beaumont was dramatically different. With power, water, sanitation, and transportation outages in the area, the Beaumont VA Outpatient Clinic remained closed until work crews from the Houston VA could complete roof repairs and install a generator for power. The facility finally reopened on Saturday, October 1, 2005 providing health care to all members of the community while recovery efforts continued in the area.

In the meantime, the MEDVAMC sent two VA-staffed mobile health clinics to Beaumont to evaluate and treat medical problems, administer immunizations, and refill prescriptions for all members of the community.

Recovery efforts continue in southeast Texas, but all agree the VA stood out as a shining star in the disaster relief efforts. Even Paul Harvey News and Comment mentioned the VA response on September 9, 2005: "So, would you like to hear about a Federal agency that *did* do its job?.....Okay, the



Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center physicians and nurses working at the Patient Reception Team at Ellington Field in Houston, Texas welcome a patient evacuated from the New Orleans VA Medical Center. With the first C-130 Air National Guard military transport aircraft arriving at 9 p.m. on August 31, 2005, the MEDVAMC PRT medically triaged almost 800 patients from 21 flights in the next five days.

VA moved 1,200 vets, staff, and family out of the hospitals in the Gulf and a good thing. The VA in Gulfport, obliterated - the one in New Orleans - useless, but the response team was in place *well* in advance. No excuses, none needed."

On October 3, 2005 by unanimous consent, the Senate adopted a resolution of praise for employees of VA for their heroic efforts following Hurricane Katrina. A portion of text of the resolution (S. Res. 263) follows:

Whereas patients and employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Texas provided extraordinary support and medical assistance to veterans, staff, and families affected by Hurricane

Katrina and coordinated numerous medical efforts as part of the overall Federal Government response and recovery efforts in the Gulf Region; and whereas heroic actions and efforts on the part of numerous employees and volunteers of the Department of Veterans Affairs saved countless lives and provided immeasurable comfort to the victims of Hurricane Katrina: Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Senate commends the employees and volunteers of the Department of Veterans Affairs, who risked life and limb to assist veterans, staff, and their respective families who were affected by Hurricane Katrina. ♦ Bobbi Gruener, MEDVAMC Public Affairs Officer

VA Mobile Health Clinics Provide Much Needed Medical Care to Hurricane Rita Victims in Southeast Texas



Maurilio Garcia-Maldonado, M.D., Beaumont VA Outpatient Clinic executive (center) gathers the staff of the VA mobile health clinics for a quick update before departing for the hurricane-affected areas of southeast Texas.

BEAUMONT, TX - When Hurricane Rita charged through southeast Texas in late September, it caused substantial damage to the infrastructure in southeast Texas and Louisiana. With power, water, sanitation, and transportation outages in the area, the Beaumont VA Outpatient Clinic (BOPC) remained closed until work crews from the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center (MEDVAMC) could complete roof repairs and install a generator for power. The facility finally reopened on October 1, 2005 providing health care to all members of the community while recovery efforts continued in the area.

In the meantime, two VA mobile health clinics staffed with VA physicians, nurses, pharmacists, and support personnel arrived to provide medical care.

In coordination with local and federal relief efforts, one VA-staffed mobile health clinic was stationed at Gateway Plaza, the staging area used by FEMA and other relief agencies. The second unit was located in the parking lot of the Beaumont VA Outpatient Clinic and served as a back-up power

source for the facility.

Providing medical assistance to victims of Hurricane Katrina in Louisiana just days before, the mobile clinics are equipped to evaluate and treat acute and chronic medical problems, administer immunizations, and refill prescriptions. Each clinic has its own generator, room for up to three patients at the same time, space for a small pharmacy, and is equipped with wireless computers, and X-ray and vital signs equipment.

To staff the clinics, employees of the BOPC, who were temporarily housed in Houston after the storm, began their day at 5:45 a.m. riding in vans to Beaumont. When the last patient had been seen, they returned to Houston, arriving about 7 p.m.

"The 12 hour days were long, but we do it willingly as we are all here to serve the veterans and to support the community," said Maurilio Garcia-Maldonado, M.D., BOPC executive.

The mobile clinics, one maintained by the MEDVAMC and the other provided by a Pennsylvania VA, departed Beaumont when services normalized in the area. ♦

VA Health Care Professionals Arrive from Across Country to Provide Care to Victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita

HOUSTON — People who say government moves too slowly have never met the employees of the Michael E. DeBakey Veterans Affairs Medical Center (MEDVAMC) in Houston.

To deal with the health care issues of the many veterans displaced by Hurricane Katrina now calling Houston home, the MEDVAMC decided to set up a temporary clinic in its 18,000 sq. ft. gymnasium. Like magic, a fully functioning health clinic was assembled in a matter of three days in what was until recently, used by veterans and MEDVAMC staff members for recreation activities. On Thursday, September 8, 2005, the day it opened, the clinic saw 125 veteran outpatients.

Construction that included building exam rooms, putting up walls, installing plumbing and sinks in each examination room, wiring phones and equipment, and setting up computers went on around the clock until the job was done. Crews were dusting off equipment and painting walls just minutes before patients began arriving.

"On Tuesday, the clinic was just talk," said J. Kalavar, M.D., director of primary care at the MEDVAMC. "By Thursday it was done." Kalavar admits the first hour was chaotic, but by the second hour, the staff all had their rhythm and operated as any first rate clinic in the city.

To imagine this feat is hard to conceive, especially when you consider that 90 percent of the medical staff

working in the new clinic have come in from other VA facilities around the country, never having worked together as a team before. One physician assistant from Anchorage, Alaska was in his cabin ready to go bear hunting when he got the call to head to Houston.

In addition to Alaska, VA health care providers including nurses, social workers, pharmacists, administrative personnel, and health care technicians arrived from more than 22 different states to help out. Steven Johnson, a medical technician from the New Orleans VA Medical Center, was one of the last to be evacuated from the hospital there. He is now working in the clinic along with other VA employees.

"I'm seeing a lot of familiar patients and it's lifting my spirits to see them and help out. They recognize me, too. I'm still here for them [the veterans] whether it's here or in New Orleans," said Johnson.

The clinic offers primary care, pharmacy, social work, mental health services as well as a laboratory, and immunizations. The clinic is designed to be fully functional for at least a year. In addition, in order to reach out to displaced veterans during the initial crisis period and provide much-needed assistance with housing, clothing, health screenings, VA and Social Security benefits, and employment, MEDVAMC outreach coordinators and social workers worked with Houston-area shelters.



New Orleans veteran James Black (left) receives care from Kathryn Bernard, (middle) a health technician from the New Orleans VA Medical Center, and Dian Teinert, (right) nurse manager for the MEDVAMC's Primary Care. Both Teinert and Bernard are now working the New Orleans Houston-based VA Outpatient Clinic.

The sign that welcomes veterans at the door of the new clinic says, "New Orleans VA Medical Center, Houston-based Outpatient Clinic." Veterans from the hurricane-affected areas are relieved to see it and know they will have one less thing to worry about.

"This is primary care for New Orleans veterans here in Houston," said

Kalavar. "Our major goal is to maintain a level of uninterrupted care for them. We have a critical mission ahead of us and as always, the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center continues in its pursuit of the highest quality of health care for our Nation's veterans." ♦ Susan Fishbein, Los Angeles Regional Public Affairs Specialist

Only Veteran Medical Records Safe from Flood Waters



Felicia Frederick, a medical technician from Durham VA Medical Center in North Carolina, takes blood from New Orleans veteran Phillip Ferrer while Richard Anderson, a medical technician from Palo Alto VA Medical Center in California, checks a patient's electronic medical record at the newly created clinic for New Orleans veterans at the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center.

HOUSTON - The majority of the one million people displaced by Hurricane Katrina now have no medical records, making it difficult for clinicians working in disaster medical centers and community hospitals to treat them. Not so with the more than 38,000 veterans

throughout southeast Louisiana, Mississippi, and the Florida panhandle who received their health care at the New Orleans VA Medical Center.

Due to VA's progressive Computerized Patient Record System (CPRS) and the quick work of VA's

information officers, all patient records, prescriptions, and laboratory and radiology results on every New Orleans VA patient are now available at any VA medical center and by any VA physician nationwide.

Because VA uses CPRS, all patient records at the New Orleans VA were backed-up, secured, and transported to the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center (MEDVAMC) in Houston and were back on-line and available by Friday, September 2, 2005.

"It took VA less than three days to have every single New Orleans patient database file backed up and transported to our VA facility," said Frank Vazquez, MEDVAMC Information Management Service Line executive. "By the time the levees broke, I decided that VA needed to have a location to send the back up tapes and make this critical patient care data available. Luckily, at our facility, we had the excess server and storage capacity, so my staff and I worked around the clock to prepare for the tapes and restore the data."

The first set of tapes filled with New Orleans patient data were first driven to Alexandria, La. and then delivered to Houston at 1 p.m. on September 2, 2005. By 8 p.m. that evening, all New Orleans VA patient data was online and ready to be viewed by any VA physician throughout the country. And this was critical, given that over 240 patients from the New Orleans VA were transported

to different VA medical centers in Dallas, Houston, San Antonio, Little Rock, Alexandria, La., Shreveport, and Jackson, Ms. by September 2, 2005.

"A second set of data tapes was brought to our facility on Sept. 5. These tapes included clinical information taken from the Baton Rouge VA clinic, where a large number of VA patients from the New Orleans area were seen on Sept. 1 and Sept. 2," said Vazquez. "In just a few short days from when the initial first set of tapes was driven to Houston, this second set of tapes already had 900 progress notes, 800 prescriptions written, and more than 2,000 outpatient clinic orders."

With a disaster of this magnitude, many New Orleans residents will be without their patient records forever because paper medical records were lost or destroyed in the disaster.

"It took the VA about 100 hours to transfer electronic health records for all its patients in the South, while it will take thousands of hours for the private sector to reconstitute paper medical records," said Francois de Brantes, the health care initiatives program leader for General Electric's Corporate Health Care and Medical Services.

The VA's CPRS system certainly paid off during this crisis situation, allowing New Orleans area veterans an opportunity to obtain immediate and uninterrupted quality health care at any VA medical center around the country. ♦ Jessica Jacobsen, Dallas Regional Public Affairs Specialist

High Tech Call System at Houston VA Enables Patients to Talk to Nurses Anywhere, Anytime

HOUSTON -Veteran inpatients at the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center (MEDVAMC) are now able to talk with their nurses anywhere, anytime simply by using a newly installed and enhanced nurse call system. Patients are able to relay their needs immediately and know a health care professional is simply a telephone call away.

As part of this enhanced nurse call system to increase patient safety and satisfaction, nurses are equipped with mobile telephones. The new system is being piloted in the Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) Care Line at the MEDVAMC where inpatients are most dependent.

"The more dependent a patient is, the more useful the system is," said Rosetta Thompson, RN, nurse manager, Spinal Cord Injury Care Line.

Quadriplegic veterans, who are unable to move their arms or legs, use the system's Environmental Control Unit that is mounted at their bedside. A small flat screen that resembles a television screen extends over the bed.

Patients use a straw like tube to puff and sip air that changes the screen

options. Once the patient selects the nurse call option, the assigned nurse's mobile telephone will ring. When the nurse receives the call, the screen will show the patient's room and bed number. This enhancement is especially beneficial for patients on ventilators. SCI veterans with hand function access the system through the hand-held nurse call system.

"This is great. It's like having a new toy. This new nurse call system is faster and better. I can talk to my nurse immediately whenever I need to," said Roger Evans, U.S. Army veteran and SCI patient.

With each shift change, a nurse will go to the main console and clear all telephone numbers assigned to the telephone he or she is using. The nurse then enters the room numbers of the patients assigned to him or her for that shift. If the nurse is unavailable for whatever reason, the telephone call will roll over to the main console at the nursing station.

"This is a great time saver. Patients talk with their nurses about their needs immediately. If I am with another



Rosetta Thompson, RN, nurse manager of the MEDVAMC Spinal Cord Injury Care Line shows U.S. Army veteran Roger Evans how to operate the newly installed and enhanced nurse call system. "This is great. It's like having a new toy. This new nurse call system is faster and better. I can talk to my nurse immediately whenever I need to," said Evans.

patient, I will let the patient know that I will be with them as quickly as possible," said Marion Mayo, LVN, Spinal Cord Injury Care Line. "The system allows nursing staff to provide a higher level of patient care by relieving any anxiety

the patient may have about nursing response time."

The system is not complicated. Patients do not have to remember telephone numbers or wait to speak to their nurse. Communication is a key to increased patient satisfaction. The ability to reach their nurse immediately is reassuring and reduces anxiety.

"Technology has come so far in the last five years. The Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center has the patient lift system, Computerized Patient Record System, Bar Code Medication Administration, robotic couriers, a filmless radiology department, and now the enhanced nurse call system. This technology has helped our nursing staff provide a higher level of patient care, and increase our patient safety and satisfaction," said Thompson. ♦ *Fran Burke, Public Affairs Specialist*

Support Group Listing . . .

The Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center offers a wide variety of support groups, for both veterans and family members. Talk with the social worker in your Prime Care Clinic for more information.

MS Self-Help Group

Meets 2nd Wednesday every month, 2 - 3:30 p.m., Nursing Unit (NU) 2A Dining Room. Facilitators: Lisa Whipple, (713) 794-7951 & Fe Runtanilla, (713) 791-1414, ext. 4559

Cancer Support Group

Meets 1st Tuesday every month, 1-2 p.m., Nursing Unit (NU) 4D Dayroom. Facilitators: Maria Lozano-Vasquez, (713) 791-1414, ext. 5273 & Chaplain Douglas Ensminger, (713) 794-7200

Pain Education Group

Meets every Wednesday, 2 p.m., Room 5C-215. Facilitator: Gabriel Tan, (713) 794-8794

Lufkin Hypertension Classes

Meets 1st Thursday every month, 2 p.m. Ask your nurse or your primary care provider, or stop by the front desk at the Charles Wilson VA Outpatient Clinic to register.

Hepatitis C Support Group

Meets 1st Friday every month, 1:30 p.m., Primecare Clinic 4 (NASA), Room 1A-442. Facilitators: Lauri Burke & Michelle Ray, (713) 791-1414, ext. 3613/3394

Pain Management for Opioid Medication Maintenance

Meets every Tuesday, 1 p.m., Room 5C-215. Facilitator: Gabriel Tan, (713) 794-8794

Renal Support Group

Meets 1st Tuesday every month, 9 a.m., Dental Conference Room 2A-312. Facilitator: Juanita Ibarra, (713) 791-1414, ext. 4834

Prostate Cancer Support Group

Meets 3rd Thursday every month, 2 p.m., Room 4C-122. Facilitators: Lillie Sonnier, (713) 791-1414, ext. 5919 & Tonjala Seals, ext. 6227

Pain Management for Women

Meets every Friday, 1 p.m., Room 5B-224. Group facilitator: Gabriel Tan, (713) 794-8794

Pain Management Pre-Pain Screening Group

Meets every Thursday, 9 a.m. and 1 p.m., Room 5C-215. Facilitator: Gabriel Tan, (713) 794-8794

Better Breather's Club

Meets last Wednesday every month, 1:30 p.m., Room 3C-371, Home Oxygen Clinic. Facilitator: Paula Denman, (713) 794-8979

Amputee Support Group

Meets 4th Wednesday every month, 3 p.m., Nursing Unit (NU) 2A Day Room. Facilitators: Anna Bracero, (713) 794-7816 & Betty Baer, (713) 794-7793

Bereavement Support Group

Meets 4th Thursday, quarterly, 2 p.m., Room 1C-270. Facilitators: Catherine Clancy & Mattheon Mcneil, (713) 794-7373

HIV Support/Educational Group

Meets every Tuesday, 2 p.m., Clinic 4, Room 1A-442. Facilitator: Kathy Molitor, (713) 791-1414, ext. 4161 & Belinda Rainer, (713) 791-1414, ext. 6177/5292

Pain Support Group

Meets every Wednesday, 1 p.m., Room 5C-215. Facilitator: Gabriel Tan, (713) 794-8794

Dementia Caregivers Group

Meets 3rd Tuesday every month, 5 p.m., Room 1C-270. Facilitator: Yvonne S. Mack, (713) 791-1414, ext. 4082

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)

Meets every Wednesday, 7 p.m., Room 6C-105. Facilitator: Bo Cook, (713) 791-1414, ext. 6987

Breast Cancer Support Group

Meets last Tuesday every month, 12 noon, Women's Health Center, Room 5B-224. Facilitators: Magdalena Ramirez & Shirley LaDay Smith, (713) 794-7926

Parkinson's Disease Education/Support Group

Call for dates and times. Facilitators: Naomi Nelson, (713) 794-8938 & Lisa Whipple, (713) 794-7951

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STOP DISEASE IN ITS TRACKS!

IT
JUST
TAKES
SECONDS!



CLEAN
YOUR
HANDS!

WHEN:

- ✓ After using restroom, touching trash, coughing, or sneezing
- ✓ Before eating ✓ After being near someone sick, coughing, or sneezing

HOW:

- ✓ Rub alcohol-based hand cleaner vigorously over hands for 30 seconds
- OR
- ✓ Use antimicrobial soap, then lather over hands, rub hands vigorously for 15 seconds, rinse and dry well, & turn off water with paper towel

WHY:

- ✓ Prevent flu, colds, and diarrhea ✓ Stay healthy
- ✓ Prevent spread of other sicknesses and diseases

DeBakey VA Coronary Care Unit Named One of Best in Houston Area

HOUSTON - The Coronary Care Unit (CCU) of the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center was recently awarded the COMET award by the American Association of Critical Care Nurses - Houston Gulf Coast Chapter. The COMET award is used by the organization to recognize the three intensive care units in the Houston Gulf Coast area that attain high quality care, provide excellent care to patients, and demonstrate a healthy workplace for nurses.

"The American Association of Critical Care Nurses scrutinized our policies to see if they are based on nationally recognized levels of evidence-based practice, if we perform ongoing data collection to support evidence-based practice, and if the nurses in our unit, based on patient assessment, can initiate requests for interdisciplinary referrals of services," said Loreta Tumangan, R.N., CCU nurse manager.

For the COMET award, the American Association of Critical Care Nurses - Houston Gulf Coast Chapter

examines the recruitment and retention; evidence-based practices; healing environments; education, training, and mentoring; patient outcomes; and leadership and organizational ethics of the organization.

"I am very proud of the job our nursing staff does here at the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center. Our personnel are very dedicated and we take seriously the job of serving those who have served our country," said Susan Dierker, R.N., Medical Care Line nurse executive.

Established in 1969 to help educate nurses working in newly developed intensive care units, the American Association of Critical Care Nurses (AACN) is the world's largest specialty nursing organization.

Veterans from around the country are referred to the MEDVAMC for specialized diagnostic care, radiation therapy, surgery, and medical treatment including cardiovascular surgery, ophthalmology, nuclear medicine, and treatment of spinal cord injury and diseases. ♦

As the smell of pumpkin pies, baked hams, and stuffed turkeys fills the air, we are reminded weight gained during the holiday season usually stays with us.

Beating the Bulge this Festive Holiday Season

HOUSTON - "Tis the season to get fatter, Fa la la la..." For many of us, it's almost a given the holiday season will add three to seven pounds to the scale. But not so, says a study conducted by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. Researchers discovered that Americans only gain 0.8 pounds in the six week holiday season. This finding was based on a representative sample of 195 volunteers. Whew! Only 0.8 pounds? Pass the sweet potato pie!!!

Unfortunately, the study also found this weight never came off over the rest of the year. That 0.8 doesn't seem like much, but volunteers in the study also gained an average of 1.4 pounds the rest of the year. Still doesn't seem like much? Well, over five years that may

mean another dress size. And it just keeps adding up, year after year. With over half our population classified as over-weight, holiday weight gain, or weight gain at any time, is just not something to hang onto.

There are many tips to keep the holiday heft at bay. Houstonians have one great advantage over the rest of the country - mostly great weather throughout fall and winter. Here are a few tips to help:

Stay Active

If you have an exercise routine, don't use the holidays as an excuse to get off schedule. It is more important than ever to keep active during

the holidays, because you most likely will be eating more fat and sugar. If you exercise regularly, your body will be better equipped to handle the extra calories. Try to get 30-40 minutes of activity daily. This can be broken into segments, 10 minutes walking to the store, 5 minutes taking the stairs, or 15 minutes dashing around doing last minute shopping.

Share the Holiday Spirit

Share holiday treats with a friend so you don't eat them all yourself.

Choose Food Wisely On the Run

Rushing through the mall or keeping a hectic holiday schedule can lead you directly to the drive-thru of a fast food restaurant. The key to eating healthy, when you have to yell your order into a speaker box, is to scan the menu for items that are baked or grilled, and not fried.

Eat Before You Go to That Party

You might think about skipping meals during the day so you can really enjoy a big dinner at night, but this is not the healthy choice. Eat regular meals before the party. Right before you go, drink a couple glasses of water and have some yogurt or fruit. These snacks will keep you from over indulging at the buffet, and the water will take away thirst which can be confused with hunger.

Just One Trip to the Buffet Line

Be selective and choose only foods you really want to eat and make the portions small. Also, when socializing, stay away from the buffet table to avoid nibbling.

Drink Lots of Water

Stay hydrated by drinking six to eight glasses of water daily. Water does far more than satisfy your thirst. Actually,

thirst is more like a signal that your body needs more fluid to perform its many functions. But thirst is not a foolproof mechanism, especially during illness or strenuous physical activity like dancing or playing a game of touch football with relatives in the backyard. Waiting to drink until you feel thirsty may be waiting too long. By then, two or more cups of body fluids may be lost.

Get Involved with Party Planning

Offer to bring a dish. Veggie or fruit trays are great choices and that way, you'll be sure there are healthy snacks at the party.

Think Small

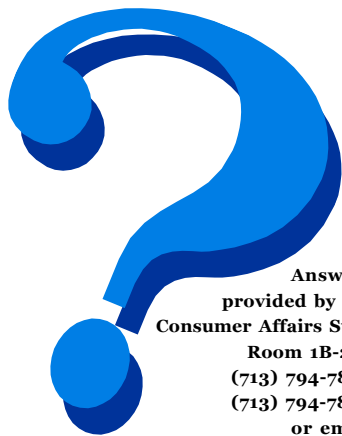
It's okay to partake in the holiday bounty, but choose smaller portions, or only one item. If the pie or cake is pre-cut, ask to share it with someone. Take half a spoonful instead of a heaping one and use the smallest plate available.

Be A Picky Eater

Don't eat foods just because they are there. Don't sit down in front of the munchies table. It's too hard to resist. Pay attention to what you are eating and remember to balance your food groups. Maybe try to keep a mental tab in your head about the food groups you've had that day. If you have mashed potatoes (starch), turkey (protein), and fruit salad (fruit) at lunch, try to have more vegetables and a dairy food at dinner.

Common sense and "everything in moderation" can get you through a lot of the holiday nutritional pitfalls. Maybe these tips, along with what you already know about proper nutrition, will help you through the season without having to waste your New Year's resolution on "Lose weight!" ♦ Anne Utech, B.S., 2004 MEDVAMC Dietetic Intern





**Answers
provided by the
Consumer Affairs Staff
Room 1B-270
(713) 794-7883
(713) 794-7884
or email**

vhahougeneralquestions@med.va.gov

Question: Is there an easy way to find out about the survivor benefits I'm entitled to?

Answer: Yes, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has created a new Internet Web site for the surviving spouses and dependents of military personnel who died on active duty and for the survivors and dependents of veterans who died after leaving the military.

The Web site is organized into two broad categories – death in service and death after service. It provides visitors with information about a wide range of benefits for the surviving spouse, dependent children, and dependent parents of deceased veterans and active-duty personnel.

The site also has information from, and links to, other federal agencies and organizations that offer benefits and services to survivors and dependents.

The new Web site can be found at www.vba.va.gov/survivors or by clicking the "Survivors Benefits" button on the left panel of www.vba.va.gov.

Question: I want to go visit family in Alabama next month. If I need to, can I go to a VA hospital there?

Answer: VA enrollment allows health care benefits to become portable throughout the entire VA system. Enrolled veterans who are traveling or who spend time away from their primary treatment facility may obtain care at any VA health care facility across the country without the worry of having to reapply.

Question: Are back issues of the VA Pride newspaper available on the Web?

Answer: Yes, the Web site is www.houston.med.va.gov/vapride.html. You will need Acrobat Reader software to view the issues.

Question: I'm elderly, on a fixed income, and have no transportation to the VA. What should I do?

Answer: The Houston METRO offers discount fares to persons with disabilities and senior citizens. These discounts are available for both local and commuter fixed-route buses, which are all wheelchair accessible. Riders age 62 through 69 may apply for the senior citizen discount. Riders age 70 and over may travel for free using the 70+ lifetime pass if eligible. METRO's RideStores are located downtown at 1001 Travis and 1900 Main St., open Monday-Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Call METROline at 713-635-4000 for more information on discounts or METRO RideStores.

Question: What documents do I need to apply for VA health care benefits?

Answer: In order to quickly process your application for VA health care, nursing home, domiciliary, or dental benefits, it is helpful to have either a copy of your discharge papers (DD-214 or "WD" form) if you are not currently

receiving benefits from VA, your military service records indicating that you received a Purple Heart Medal, or evidence that you received hostile fire or imminent danger pay or a combat medal after this date if you indicated that you were in combat after Nov. 11, 1998.

There is a comprehensive booklet on the Internet at http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility/coveredservices/Benefits_Guide_v4.pdf containing information about VA enrollment, eligibility, benefits, covered services, and frequently asked questions about VA medical care and services.

Question: Who should I call if I am experiencing side effects from my medication?

Answer: For life-threatening emergencies, always call 911. Otherwise, call the VA Network Telecare Center at (713) 794-8985 or toll free 1-800-639-5137, or your Prime Care Team.

Question: I have questions about my medical bill. How do I get answers?

Answer: The VA now has a consolidated Call Center available to answer your billing questions. Call toll free 1-866-802-6381, Monday - Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Trained and friendly VA Health Revenue Center staff can assist with your VA billing statement questions. A new computer system will allow the staff there to view your billing records and get the information they need to answer your questions quickly. The new system is accurate, secure, and confidential.

Question: Hearing aids and eyeglasses are listed as "limited" benefits. Under what circumstances do I qualify?

Answer: To qualify for hearing aids and eyeglasses you must have a VA service-connected disability rating of 10 percent

or more. You may also qualify if you are a former prisoner of war, Purple Heart recipient, require this benefit for treatment of a 0 percent service-connected condition, or are receiving increased pension based on your need for regular aid and attendance or being permanently housebound.

Question: Where can I get more information about Parkinson's disease and research being done to find a cure?

Answer: Contact Naomi D. Nelson, Ph.D., R.N. at the Houston Parkinson's Disease Research, Education, and Clinical Center (PADRECC) at (713) 794-7841 or naomi.nelson@med.va.gov. The PADRECC also has an informative Web site at www.va.gov/padrec-houston.

Question: Do I have to enroll to receive VA health care?

Answer: While most veterans must be enrolled to receive VA health care, some veterans are exempt from the enrollment requirement due to meeting special eligibility criteria.

If you fall into one of the following categories, you are not required to enroll: (1) if you are seeking care for a VA-rated service-connected disability; (2) if VA has rated you with a service-connected disability of 50% or more; and (3) if less than one year has passed since you were discharged for a disability that the military determined was incurred or aggravated in the line of duty, but that VA has not yet rated.

Question: I already receive VA care, but I don't remember enrolling. How can I verify my enrollment?

Answer: If you are uncertain about your VA enrollment, call the VA Health Benefits Service Center at 1-800-222-VETS (8387).

Important VA Telephone Numbers

Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center Main Line	(713) 791-1414
	or toll-free 1-800-553-2278
VA Network Telecare Center	(713) 794-8985
	or toll-free 1-800-639-5137
Beaumont VA Outpatient Clinic	(409) 981-8550
	or toll-free 1-800-833-7734
Charles Wilson VA Outpatient Clinic (Lufkin)	(936) 637-1342
	or toll-free 1-800-209-3120
Galveston VA Outpatient Clinic	(409) 741-0256
	or toll-free 1-800-310-5001
Texas City VA Outpatient Clinic	(409) 986-1129
	or toll-free 1-800-310-5001
Pharmacy Refills	(713) 794-7648
	or toll-free 1-800-454-1062
Pharmacy Helpline	(713) 794-7653
Appointment Information	(713) 794-7648
	or toll-free 1-800-454-1062
VA Eligibility & Enrollment	(713) 794-7288
Patient Education Resource Center (PERC)	(713) 794-7856
VA Police	(713) 794-7106
Vet Center (Post Oak Road)	(713) 682-2288
Vet Center (Westheimer)	(713) 523-0884
Patient Representatives	
Houston/Galveston/Texas City	(713) 794-7884
Beaumont	1-800-833-7734
	extension 113
Lufkin	(936) 633-2753
Houston National Cemetery	(281) 447-8686
VA Regional Office	
Main Number	1-800-827-1000
Compensation/Pension	1-800-827-1000
Home Loans	1-888-232-2571
Education	1-888-442-4551



*7th Annual Houston
Salutes American Heroes*

Veterans Day Commemoration & Parade of Heroes

**Friday, Nov. 11, 2005
Downtown Houston**

Ceremony, 10-11 a.m.
Hermann Square
901 Bagby Street

Parade, 11:30 a.m.
Begins at Smith and Texas
Concludes at Bagby Street

For more information, call
(713) 437-6351
or visit this Web site:
www.houstonspecialevents.org

Veterans Day Mass

Nov. 11, 2005, 11 a.m.
4th Floor Auditorium
Michael E. DeBakey
VA Medical Center

Archbishop Joseph A. Fiorena
will preside and all veterans
are invited. The Mass will be
dedicated to all men and
women who have and are
still serving the U.S. Armed
Forces. For more information,
call (713) 794-7202.